The Devil in the Detail
Doing Social Work Under the Canopy of Active Labour Market Policy

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Client: I know the creative stuff, I can feel that it motivates me

SW: It motivates you?

Client: Because, as a matter of fact I have (. ) I have used the knitting to relax and I have been invited to join a knitting club. I have been to a shop, and I don’t know if it could (. )? If I suck up to them?

SW: Yes but I really think this is good for you, this. I really believe so. Shouldn’t we just say that this is what we plan [clients name]?

Client: yes

SW: Good. You will be hearing from me. Both about vacation and about the introductory meeting or visitation meeting at [social measure]

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SW: Exactly. And that is the reason that right now I will not demand (. ) right now I would like to get you started in some kind of activity that brings you pleasure. Something that can motivate you. In the long run, our goal is to get you settled in relation to the employment area and protection needs regarding you back problems, and then we can work from there. So what? Which areas of employment could be options for you? We will consider that along the way
The relationship between social policy and employment policy?
Meet Sune
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interviewee</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Outline of problems besides unemployment</th>
<th>Current position</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Depression, anxiety, borderline diagnosis, placed out of home in childhood, with a family background of alcoholism</td>
<td>Education (currently on maternity leave)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AM</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Depression, anxiety, social phobia</td>
<td>Training to be a tattooist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Anorexia, paranoid schizophrenia, no primary education, several years of hospitalisations and admissions to protected residences</td>
<td>Flex-job in a café, 20 hours a week</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Severe back pain, PTSD</td>
<td>Full-time job as a taxi-driver</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Depression, eating disorder, drug abuse, placed out of home in childhood after father committed suicide</td>
<td>Full-time job in a furniture shop</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Long-term unemployed – no work experience, physical problems, depression, mentally sick daughter and son with ADHD</td>
<td>Flex-job in a school canteen, 12 hours a week</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Criminal record, alcohol abuse, childhood with addict parents and out-of-home placement, daughters with mental problems</td>
<td>Full-time job working with after school care for children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Problematic childhood, abusive mother, out-of-home placement for most of childhood, drug abuse, financial problems</td>
<td>Full-time job in a manufacturing company</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>No education, physical problems, diagnosed with fibromyalgia after several years of pain</td>
<td>Flex-job in husband’s company, six hours a week</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Linking street level bureaucracy with institutional interaction and an CA inspired analysis

- Institutional exchanges between social workers (SLB) and vulnerable clients in Danish Jobcentres

- Paying attention to *how* policy is accomplished on the street-level interactions between clients and frontline workers in the Jobcentres

- Encourage clients to talk in ways that relate to the labour market – even when the clients have problematic and marginalised stories to tell

- A perspective that enable a focus on the co-construction that takes place between frontline worker and client
The alleged effect of meetings between unemployed clients and case workers?
Do you have any questions?

No
Do you have some questions?

Well let me tell you…

Heritage et al. 2007
And it is always best, if you can provide for yourself in flexible employment. That is also what they write in the recommendation. They write: it is assessed that the workability is reduced substantially. But here will be opportunities to support the client in question in a resource benefit process in a manner that can create stability and structure around the family for the purpose of enabling a process of work experience and clarification. So the goal is always to find employment.
General talk

- broad and unspecified
- institutionally and politically legitimate
- treated as relevant by participants
- accept labour market participation as the ultimate goal.
- un-clearity of the general talk enables SLB’s and clients to address issues of labour market participation without either of the participants committing to a specific measure or solution.
About a year ago, if we just turn back time, you still talked about all you wanted to do was to sing and dance, nothing else, and we were walking up and down the pedestrian street looking at possible options, right? You have just come such a long way [client name]. And you still have the dream of the goal, but you also know that it takes something else to earn your own money.

and you are so good with kids and you are so good at dancing and this really is a good combination

and you talk just so enthusiastically about it. You know like really

Well that is really nice to hear
Concrete talk

• specific opportunities and experiences for the unemployed client
• words that are specifically addressing work places, wishes and experiences of the unemployed client and sometimes the street-level bureaucrat
• how is labour market perspectives translated into something concrete and meaningful for the individual client
• especially relevant when considering the broad client group with diverse and complex problems besides unemployment
LISES: Five potentials
https://lisessite.wordpress.com/category/english/

Potentials for more effective and innovative services for vulnerable unemployed are expected to be found in:

1. Local political and organisational strategies and management that both can enhance the involvement of clients and adapt to changing policy and financial requirements

2. Integrated services across sectors and organisational units

3. The institutional interaction (such as meetings and conversations) between professionals and clients

4. Actual client participation and co-production with the citizens

5. Co-operation with companies integrating employer expectation and engagement in the employment services for these groups
Gaining an in depth understanding of policy in practice

Ethnographic case studies in six Danish municipalities, including:

• 75 observations of meeting between case workers and clients
• 14 ‘positive deviance’ cases
• 52 observations of meetings in the organisations
• 17 interviews with clients
• Over 50 MILP (mutual innovation and learning platforms) including seminars: knowledge exchange between professionals/managers and researchers
• OPEN access to all practice in the participating municipalities
MILP= Mutual Innovation and Learning Platform

Model inspired by Sommerfeld & Gredig 2008
Andersen, Caswell & Larsen 2017
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The MILP workshop

SW: I think then she actually start to say I have been to a shop, and I don’t know if it could (.)? If I suck up to them? Become an opportunity for work placement. And then I continue to say – but I just have not caught on to it 😊 in the conversation 😊 but I just continue to say.

Researcher: That is pretty interesting.

SW: Yes but I really think this is good for you, this. I really believe so. Shouldn’t we just say that this is what we plan [clients name]? If I had caught on to that one with her saying If I suck up to them?

Researcher: Yes.

SW: Then I could maybe have asked her, but what do you mean by that? Are you actually thinking that this could become a work placement? And I have actually not noticed that.

Researcher: That was an opportunity of ‘caching’ you missed there?

Colleague: Yes as a matter of fact it was.

SW: And I can’t even remember I heard her say that. About that knitting, I really can’t remember at all.
Ressources for the SLB

• Qualifications
  • increasing professional awareness of details of communication – such as general vs. concrete talk
  • requires attention to what is meaningful for the client
  • ‘catching’ the sometimes slim and marginal labour market perspectives as they are expressed by vulnerable clients can be challenging and the issue of timing seems to be of the utmost importance

• Organisational context
  • Opening the communicative practice to co-vision and feedback
“Lending an ear” – working towards improving the quality of meetings

Curiosity towards what is actually being said

Accepting that naturally occurring talk deviates from how we assume talk is

Openness and willingness to make communicative turn-taking an object for professional reflection in situ

Reflection on what goes on precedes evaluation

For more details see:
References


Caswell, D & Dall, T 2018, 'Sociologisk samtaleanalyse som potentiale for fællesfaglig refleksion. En model til forskningsunderstøttet udvikling af praksis på beskæftigelsesområdet.' *Uden for Nummer*


